

MAY 22, 2008

A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

Americans are calling for a New Direction after years of inaction and incompetence on the toughest challenges: a costly war without an end; skyrocketing fuel prices without a plan for energy security; a housing crisis which threatens to force more families from their homes. All have pushed us to the brink of recession.

The New Direction Congress moved quickly to address the downturn and rebuild our economy. With bipartisan support and unprecedented speed, we enacted an economic stimulus plan that put Recovery Rebates in the hands of 130 million American households and will help create 500,000 jobs.

We are working now to tackle the housing foreclosure crisis ... combat record prices at the pump ... extend Unemployment Insurance to the growing number of Americans looking for work ... make healthy food affordable to millions of Americans ... launch a new GI Bill for a full, four-year education for the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan ... and help restore consumer confidence by protecting our children from toxic toys.

We are building on a strong record.

We made America more secure ... by making the 9/11 Commission recommendations the law of the land to protect Americans and fight terrorism with cargo container and airline screening, security funding distributed on the basis of risk not politics, and improved first responder communications ... and by reducing global warming and our dependence on foreign oil with an historic Energy Independence law that improves vehicle fuel efficiency for the first time in 32 years and makes an historic commitment to American-grown bio-fuels.

We helped put the American Dream back within reach ... with the first minimum wage increase in a decade, and the second increase coming in July ... the largest college aid expansion in six decades ... and a national science, technology, math, and engineering teacher corps to spur innovation across our economy.

We met our commitments ... with the largest increase in funding for veterans' health care in history ... overdue aid to the Gulf Coast recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ... landmark ethics reform ... the first election-year budget agreement in 8 years ... and a new commitment to fiscal responsibility.

We have listened to Americans who demanded a New Direction in Iraq—but our efforts have been resisted again and again. The cost to our troops and their families, our military readiness, our ability to defeat terrorism, our reputation in the world ... and our economy ... has been staggering.

The New Direction Congress must and will do more to:

- ★ **rebuild the American economy and create good-paying jobs here at home,**
- ★ **strengthen America's national security and rebuild our military,**
- ★ **reduce the cost of health care, and**
- ★ **reverse global warming.**

It's time for change.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- ★ Recovery Rebates to jumpstart economy, help Americans with rising costs **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ First increase in the minimum wage in a decade **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Highway Bill, creating 40,000 good-paying jobs **ON PRESIDENT'S DESK**
- ★ Farm Bill with historic new investments in nutrition, energy, and conservation, and launching reforms to farm payments to reflect farmer need **VETO OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS, ENACTED INTO LAW**
- ★ Terrorism risk insurance extension, aiding economic growth **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Closing tax loopholes for companies and executives that ship American jobs or investment offshore **PASSED HOUSE**

HOUSING FORECLOSURE CRISIS

- ★ Comprehensive housing foreclosure crisis bill, preventing families from losing their homes, and a critical step in an American economic recovery **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Reform of the Federal Housing Administration, expanding access to affordable mortgages, and to "reverse mortgages" for seniors who need equity from their homes **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Stopping tax on "income" when lender forgives part of mortgage in foreclosure **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Helping states/localities purchase foreclosed homes, stabilizing communities **PASSED HOUSE**

EDUCATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

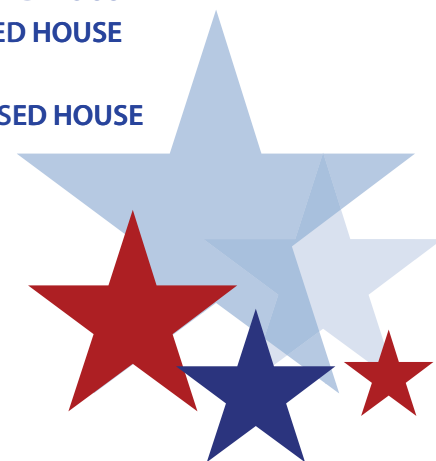
- ★ Largest college aid expansion since the GI Bill in 1944 **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Uninterrupted access to low-cost student loans, despite credit crunch **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Giving colleges incentives to rein in tuition increases **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Cleaning up abuses in the student loan industry **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Innovation agenda creating a math/science teacher corps; doubling basic research funding **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extended tax cut for innovative research & development **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Head Start preschool improved and expanded **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Key investments in education **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**

REDUCING TAXES

- ★ A tax cut for 19 million middle-income American families facing the AMT **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Internet tax moratorium extension **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extended tax cuts for homeowners, families with children, college students, teachers **PASSED HOUSE**

AMERICAN WORKERS

- ★ Minimum wage increased for the first time in a decade, 2nd phase this July **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extending & improving help for workers who lose jobs to foreign competition **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Allowing women & other workers to pursue pay discrimination claims **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Collective bargaining rights for first responders **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Free choice for workers to choose their own bargaining representative **PASSED HOUSE**



AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

- ★ Health care coverage for 10 million American children **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Expansion of life-saving stem cell research that could cure or prevent chronic diseases **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Key investments in health care **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Ban on genetic information discrimination in health coverage **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Ending discriminatory treatment of mental health care coverage **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Medicare required to negotiate cheaper drugs for seniors and disabled Americans **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Preserving access to and improving Medicare by reforming provider reimbursements and expanding benefits **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Blocking \$18 billion cut in health care for low-income children & seniors **PASSED HOUSE**

NATIONAL SECURITY

- ★ 9/11 Commission terrorism recommendations given force of law **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Investments to begin to fix the military readiness crisis **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Iraq benchmarks, progress reports required **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Providing for responsible redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Extending ban on torture to U.S. intelligence personnel **VETOED BY PRESIDENT**
- ★ Strong Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) reforms **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Tighter foreign investment rules, after Dubai Ports scandal **SIGNED INTO LAW**

TROOPS AND VETERANS

- ★ Largest veterans' health care funding increase in history **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Wounded Warrior Act, improving health care after Walter Reed scandal **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ New GI Bill to give free college education to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Major pay raise for troops **SIGNED INTO LAW**

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING

- ★ Landmark Energy Independence law: first new fuel efficiency standards in 32 years, building efficiency standards, historic commitment to bio-fuels **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Extending and expanding tax incentives to invest in clean, renewable energy **PASSED HOUSE**
- ★ Historic new support for non-food bio-fuels in the Farm Bill **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Directing the President to lower gas prices by suspending deposits to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Holding OPEC and Big Oil accountable for price fixing **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Cracking down on price gouging by oil companies **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Greening the Capitol, making Congress carbon neutral **ENACTED BY HOUSE**

REBUILDING AMERICA

- ★ Aid to the Gulf Coast recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Major new commitment to flood control & environmental restoration projects **VETO OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS, ENACTED INTO LAW**
- ★ Omnibus Public Lands Bill, with new protections for national parks, wilderness, historic sites, trails, and water resources from coast to coast **SIGNED INTO LAW**

CONSUMER PROTECTION

- ★ Most sweeping FDA drug safety provisions in more than a decade **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Banning toxic toys from China and other countries **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Passenger Bill of Rights for airline travelers **PASSED HOUSE**

FIGHTING CRIME

- ★ Improved background checks for gun purchases **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ 3,000 New Border Patrol Officers **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Saved the critical COPS program, proposed for elimination by the President **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Tools and resources to prevent and prosecute hate crimes **PASSED BY HOUSE**

FISCAL DISCIPLINE

- ★ Pay-as-you-go budget discipline **ADOPTED IN HOUSE RULES**
- ★ A fiscally responsible budget that balances by 2012 and invests in key priorities **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE, NO PRESIDENTIAL ACTION REQUIRED**

RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY

- ★ Widely-acclaimed landmark lobbying and ethics reform **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ New historic independent Office of Congressional Ethics **ADOPTED IN HOUSE RULES**
- ★ Banning pensions for Members of Congress convicted of certain crimes **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Strengthening Freedom of Information Act for government transparency **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ U.S. Attorney appointments depoliticized **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Reducing enormous backlog in passport processing **SIGNED INTO LAW**
- ★ Cracking down on "no-bid" contracts **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Whistleblower protections strengthened **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Strengthening independence of federal Inspectors General **PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE**
- ★ Holding private security firms in war zones accountable for criminal actions **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Prohibiting profiteering by U.S. contractors operating in war zones **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Withholding federal contracts from tax-delinquent companies **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Closing offshore tax loopholes for federal contractors **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Requiring mandatory fraud reporting for U.S. contractors **PASSED BY HOUSE**
- ★ Requiring more transparency by companies that rely on federal contracts **PASSED BY HOUSE**

